

LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY FOR:**February 10, 2003**

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LAST WEEK**LEGISLATION OF NOTE**

The following Bills of significance to NRCS and conservation have been introduced:

Bill	Sponsor	Purpose
S. 212	Bingaman, NM	To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to cooperate with the High Plains States in conducting a hydrogeologic characterization, mapping, modeling and monitoring program for the High Plains Aquifer.
H. R. 376	Musgrave, OH	To provide emergency livestock assistance and emergency crop loss assistance to agricultural producers who suffered 2001 or 2002 crop year losses.

NEW CONTINUING RESOLUTION – On Wednesday, February 5, 2003, the House passed and on Thursday, February 6 the Senate passed H.J. Res. 18, legislation that provides for continuing FY 2003 appropriations until February 20, 2003.

WATERSHEDS BRIEFING-On February 7, 2003, NRCS held a briefing for the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee staff on the FY 2004 budget. Harry Slawter, Acting Director-Watersheds and Wetlands Division, and NRCS budget staff conducted the briefing. Committee staff asked several questions regarding the backlog in watershed program requests and the specific locations and funding amounts associated with the projects.

SENATE AGRICULTURE SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS- The Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry (Chairman Cochran, R-MS) has named the following subcommittee members for the 108th Congress.

Subcommittee on Forestry, Conservation and Rural Revitalization

Mike Crapo, ID	Chair	Blanche Lincoln, LA	Ranking Member
Richard Lugar, IN		Mark Dayton, MN	
Norm Coleman, MN		Patrick Leahy, VT	
James Talent, MO		Thomas Daschle, SD	
Mitch McConnell, KY		E. Benjamin Nelson, NE	
Pat Roberts, KS			

Subcommittee on Production and Price Competitiveness

Elizabeth Dole, NC	Chair	Kent Conrad, ND	Ranking Member
Mitch McConnell, KY		Thomas Daschle, SD	
Pat Roberts, KS		Zell Miller, GA	
Saxby Chambliss, GA		Max Baucus, MT	
Norm Coleman, MN		Blanch Lincoln, AR	
Charles Grassley, IA			

Subcommittee on Marketing, Inspection and Product Promotion

James Talent, MO	Chair	Max Baucus, MT	Ranking Member
Pat Roberts, KS		E. Benjamin Nelson, NE	
Peter Fitzgerald, IL		Kent Conrad, ND	
Saxby Chambliss, GA		Debbie Stabenow, MI	
Charles Grassley, IA			

Subcommittee on Research, Nutrition and General Legislation

Peter Fitzgerald, IL	Chair	Patrick Leahy, VT	Ranking Member
Richard Lugar, IN		Debbie Stabenow, MI	
Mitch McConnell, KY		Zell Miller, GA	
Mike Crapo, ID		Mark Dayton, MN	
Elizabeth Dole, NC			

HOUSE NAMES DEMOCRAT MEMBERS TO AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE – House Democrats have tentatively named Representatives Rodney Alexander (LA), Frank Balance (NC), Dennis Cordova (CA), Ed Case (HI), James Marshall (GA) and David Scott (GA) to serve on the House Agriculture Committee. The Caucus also accepted the resignations of Democrat members, Rep. Leonard Boswell, (IA) and Rep. Rick Larsen (WA). Other new Members of the Agriculture Committee may be named in the coming weeks.

THIS WEEK

FISCAL 2003 OMNIBUS APPROPRIATIONS CONFERENCE COMMITTEE – The House and Senate Conferees plan to meet to consider legislation that would make omnibus fiscal 2003 appropriations.

February 10

Time TBA

Location TBA

CLIMATE CHANGE BRIEFING-On Monday February 10-11, 2003, the American Society of Agronomy will conduct two congressional briefings regarding agriculture and climate change. The briefings will focus on carbon sequestration and will serve as a forum for exchange of information between farmers, education/research institutions, as well as private and public sector representatives. Dr. John Kimble, Research Scientist from the NRCS National Soil Survey Center has been requested by the Society to attend.

February 10

1:00 p.m.

2105 Rayburn Bldg.

February 11

1:00 p.m.

562 Dirksen Bldg.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS BRIEFING-On Wednesday, February 12, 2003, the University Consortium for Geographic Information Science (UCGIS) will conduct a briefing on the role of GIS technology in meeting the nation's scientific, economic, and social needs. A project conducted by a research group led by Professors A-Xing-Zhu and James Burt at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, in collaboration with NRCS is one of six projects selected by the Consortium to be showcased at the presentation.

February 12

8:30 a.m.

Capitol Hill Club

LOOKING AHEAD

HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS HEARINGS - On February 27, 2003, Secretary Veneman is scheduled to appear before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies to discuss the FY 2004 budget.

WATERSHEDS HEARING-On February 27, 2003, Associate Chief Tom Weber will testify before the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee (Chairman Duncan, R-TN) on Water Resources and Environmental regarding the FY 2004 NRCS budget for watershed programs.

WATER QUALITY TRADING HEARING-On February 27, 2003, Chief Bruce Knight will testify before the House Government Reform, Subcommittee on Energy Policy, Natural Resources, and Regulatory Affairs (Chairman, Ose, R- CA) regarding water quality trading policy.
